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THOMSON'S COLLEGE

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LITERATURE OF THE DAY.

DEATH.

There is a shadow standing by the cradle

Where sleepeth softly a beloved child;

It waits anxiously at the gazed features;

And mocks our laughter with its laughter wild;

It standeth by our bedside, by our table,

And with its touch the present is defiled.

It jeers our faint attempts to be forgetful,

Stands in the shadowy body at the dance,

Joins all our pleasures, shading them with gloom;

That soon its claims it will advance.

We dare it for awhile; then pray in anguish

That it will haste to throw its poisoned lance.

And yet it doth defer its blow. Ah! surely

Those have the best that follow it the first.

So shall they never see their dearest perish.

Go! go! one's self is surely not the worst.

Tis those who live beyond their best and dearest

Who really feel that death's a thing accursed.

—All the Year Round.

MULTIPLICATION OF COLLEGES.

The address "Education and the State," delivered by President Barnard, of Columbia College, at the first Commencement of the University of the State of New York, has been published in full in a large-page pamphlet of some 40 pages, and contains many views and suggestions, which, as coming from a practical educator, and the head of the oldest college in this State, are worthy of careful perusal.

As to the higher education—what is generally understood by the term liberal—he takes the ground that the policy that fosters, instead of restraining, the multiplication of colleges is, at least in the present condition of affairs, a very mistaken one; that there are too many colleges, not too few, and that the excessive multiplication of these institutions is not only not a good, but a positive evil. "Because," he says, "as the number increases, the strength diminishes, with an effect upon the average quality of collegiate instruction as unfortunate as it is unavoidable." In support of this view, Dr. Barnard discloses the error of the popular impression that the number of college students in this country has increased in proportion to the increase of facilities—an error which is abundantly proved by statistics. At the present time, taking the country through, the average number of candidates for the baccalaureate is to the total population as 1 to 2,500, and this ratio remains practically unaltered from year to year. Retrospect shows, however, that the ratio has decreased about 20 per cent. in the last fifty years. During the first quarter of the present century, when colleges were few as compared with 1880, the ratio of such candidates to general population was 1 to 2,000; so that, while our population has increased fourfold, and the number of colleges threefold in the last half a century, there are but little more than twice as many students in all the colleges put together. Such figures need no comment, although there are causes, connected with our vast immigration during the period specified, which, while not affecting the certainty of Dr. Barnard's statistics, must necessarily modify the unfavorable conclusions drawn from them. Estimating our population at 45,000,000, and the whole number of undergraduates furnished by it at 18,000, which is not far from the mark, the average number to each college is only a little over 40; whereas, almost any one of them can readily accommodate 500, and, in order to get on prosperously, must have about 300. In this State, with its 5,000,000 inhabitants, there are only about 1,800 college students, yielding a ratio to population of 1 to 2,700. Having made out the nature of the disease, President Barnard, like a good physician, points out the remedy. He would have the State reserve to itself the exclusive right of granting academic degrees, placing all our colleges upon the same footing as Oxford and Cambridge, each State establishing for itself a State University, supervising all its colleges, examining all candidates, and conferring all degrees.—N. Y. Times.

FIDELITY IRREVOCABLE.

There is a favorite subject of modern fiction: a man or woman married hastily or unhappily, and meeting afterwards some "selective affinity," the right man or woman, or apparently such. No doubt this is a terrible position, pathetic, tragic, which may happen to the most guileless persons, and does happen, perhaps, oftener than any one knows. Novelists seize upon it as a dramatic position, and paint it in such glowing, tender, and pathetic colors that, absorbed in the pity of the thing, one quite forgets its sin. The hapless lovers rouse our deepest sympathy; we follow them to the very verge of crime, almost regretting that it is called crime, and when the obnoxious husband or wife dies, and the lovers are dismissed to happiness—as is usually done—we feel quite relieved and comfortable! Now, surely this is immoral, as immoral as the coarsest sentence Shakespeare ever penned, or the most passionate picture that Shelley or Byron ever drew. Nay, more so, for these are only nature—vicious, undisciplined, but natural still, and making no pretence of virtue; but your sentimentalists assume a virtue, and expect sympathy for